Iddle Lessons

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/61638346.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Categories:	F/M, Gen
Fandoms:	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles - All Media Types, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (TV 2003)
Relationships:	Hamato Yoshi/Tang Shen, Hamato Yoshi & Splinter, Splinter & Tang Shen, Splinter & The Turtles (TMNT)
Characters:	Hamato Yoshi, Splinter (TMNT), Tang Shen, Ancient One (TMNT)
Additional Tags:	No Plot/Plotless, Canonical Character Death, Idk what else to tag this is just 'two times splinter was taught to read and one he taught to read', No beta we die like Hamato Yoshi
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2024-12-25 Words: 896 Chapters: 1/1

Iddle Lessons

by gemini_in_tauro

Summary

Tang Shen had figured it would be a funny idea.

Notes

Bc the 2003 TV show treats Hamato Yoshi like Splinter's father (he even calls him that!) then it's not that far-fetched to imagine Tang Shen would be his mom figure or something since he was her pet originally, yes?

Now, I normally headcanon the 2003 turtles as having learned how to read thanks to Sesame Street reruns on an old TV and Splinter teaching them however much he knew, but for the sake of this story, that headcanon is momentarily suspended.

Also: I headcanon 2003!Tang Shen as mixing sometimes Chinese with Japanese words (hence the Xiao Nezumi when splinter had no name) bc of her heritage + that i feel like the Ancient One has to have at least uprooted her from China. Or something, idk.

“Sa, shi, su, se, so…”

Tang Shen lying face down, with a hiragana sheet on her hands, and her pet rat looking attentively at the symbols she was pointing at.

That was the sight that welcomed Yoshi after a long day of training to be a Guardian.

He smiled at them. “What is going on here?”

Upon hearing him approaching, the young woman stood from the grass and ran towards him, wrapping him in between her arms.

“Yoshi!” She smiled. Behind her, the rat was catching up until he reached them both and then climbed until he was on Shen’s shoulder, chirping what Yoshi interpreted to be a welcoming as well. “I was teaching Xiao Nezumi to read, of course. He was looking at my calligraphy the other day and I figured why not, right?”

Yoshi rolled his eyes. “Teaching him to read? And how well has that gone for you?” They started walking towards their home, where the Ancient One was enjoying a tea and reading a letter.

Tang Shen shrugged. “He's extremely intelligent. So far he can understand two rows, he can point at them with his nose when I ask for it. We were going over the Sa row until you arrived.”

Her pet preened proudly, knowing they were talking about him. Yoshi couldn’t help but inwardly agree with Shen in that aspect—he was a very intelligent rat, even with all that he had seen through his training with the Utroms.

Upon reaching the house, he bowed towards the Ancient One. “Sensei, I have arrived from my training.”

The Ancient One nodded, acknowledging his arrival. “Welcome back, Yoshi.” He looked between the both of them, then to the hill, searching for someone that wasn't there. “Where’s Mashimi?”

Yoshi looked forlornly to the floor, avoiding his gaze.

“He said he had something else to do after the training and stayed in the city.”

The Ancient One snorted, but didn't try to content that. Their talks regarding anything that had to do with the Utroms were still filled with all sorts of uncomfortable silences and disapproving stares. Long ago had they gone through the denial stage, but Yoshi knew that this was a decision that the ninja master would not agree with him.

Shen, bless her heart, pretended not to notice and turned to him, grabbing him by he shoulders and smiling cheerfully.

“How about you take a bath? The sake father and I were brewing has finally finished fermenting. I was going to prepare something to go with it and it will be ready by the time you're done.”

“Shen is correct in that you should bath, Yoshi. You stink a lot.”

Yoshi looked at himself, smelling his own shirt like it was the first time the thought occured him. He grimaced.

“You're probably right. I will do that, and then dinner it is.”

It was said to be the City that Never Slept, and Yoshi figured it had some sort of truth to it, as he had arrived at four in the morning (New York time, at least, to him it felt like it was six or seven in the afternoon) and there were still people on the streets if he didn't count Mr. Mortu, who had so kindly agreed to meet him outside the TCRI building just as he had arrived to the city to continue with his duty as a Guardian Prime.

Despite the overseas travel, Yoshi felt like he had done very little to escape his ghosts. Fortunately for him, Splinter proved to be a formidable company.

One day, as he was reading an Utrom report, wondering what his younger self would think about having to learn an alien language, he was reminded of something that Shen once said.

“Hey, Splinter, come here.” He opened his cage, helping the rodent to his shoulder. His peerless, dark eyes stared into him, the question clearly written in his rodent face. “Shen never finished teaching you to read, did she?”

Splinter didn’t answer him. Yoshi hadn’t expected him to, though.

From his bag, he took out his Utrom-English dictionary, where he had already made annotations that helped him not have to mentally translate everything to Japanese.

“Similarly to the Japanese kanas, the Utrom language is based on syllables…”

Splinter wasn’t very sure of when it had started, or what had been prompted. But what he did know was that Donatello had been the one to instigate his brothers into asking him for advice.

Not only were they seeking guidance from him as their bushido sensei, they wanted him to teach them how to read.

If he thought about it, it was the logical option. After that fateful day when they had been doused with a green substance and he had decided to take on as a parent for them, he knew he would have to teach them everything he knew. As they grew more curious about the world around them, they also started asking questions about the strange symbols that they couldn’t interpret.

“Please, Master Splinter? Could you?”

Forth, memories long buried of afternoons spent sunbathing with Shen quizzing him on hiragana and katakana came forth. Of evenings pouring over textbooks with Yoshi in a language that he doesn't recognize, and feels that perhaps it shouldn't be taught to those who don't know the secret.

"I suppose I could help with that…"

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!